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# Colville to Goble

## Some Thoughts on the Evolving Place of Photography in Canadian Military Art

LAURA BRANDON

*Abstract: This article focuses on the photographic work of two Canadian military artists whose careers are separated by half a century. Alex Colville (1920–2013) used photography in his work but rarely mentioned it and never publicly exhibited or acknowledged it. Elaine Goble (born 1956) bases all her work on photography, engages explicitly with it, acknowledges it, exhibits and donates it, but does not consider herself a professional photographer. An exploration of these two artists' relationship with photography sheds some light on how attitudes to the medium have changed in recent decades. Photography's new prominence in the digital age has affected artists, photographers, institutions, collectors, as well as art and photo historians, and encouraged reconsideration of past practices.*

TWENTY-ONE years ago, in 1995, I published an article in this journal entitled “Genesis of a Painting: Alex Colville’s War Drawings.”<sup>1</sup> My piece focused on the relationship between the artist’s works on paper and his finished canvases. Colville’s generous donation of almost all his wartime drawings to the Canadian War Museum in 1982, thirteen years earlier and prior to my employment as Curator of War Art at the museum, had made my long-ago investigation possible.<sup>2</sup> Since then, a paradigm shift in the historiography of

<sup>1</sup> Laura Brandon, “Genesis of a Painting: Alex Colville’s War Drawings,” *Canadian Military History* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1995), 100–4, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=cmh> (accessed 26 May 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Canadian War Museum, 19820303 includes more than 380 individual Colville

military art has occurred and the National Gallery of Canada's 2013 acquisition of the artist's personal war photographs now provides the archival documentation I needed to revise my 1995 conclusions about the artist's Second World War creative processes.<sup>3</sup> In the present article, I will show that Colville's photographic sources as well as increasingly prominent roles for photography in war and military art now make this revision necessary.

My Colville research could not easily have been completed two decades ago when photography's part in making war art was barely acknowledged, explored or documented.<sup>4</sup> War art and war photography were at that time established as separate genres.<sup>5</sup> Military historians and institutions generally valued photography for its documentary content rather than as art or artistic inspiration and placed a premium on official rather than personal images, especially those on canvas.

The public shared the view that it was the indexical value of a photograph that gave it authority. Thus, for example, a photograph of a dead soldier linked almost physically to the actual corpse, as a camera could only record exactly what was before it. Hence, during the First World War, the Canadian military authorities' ban on soldiers' cameras in March 1915.<sup>6</sup> If there were no photographs of dead Canadians available for families and the public to see then some control might be exercised over public reaction to the shocking number of deaths.

The recognition that photography can be an art form in its own right, an aid to art making, and a documentary record—sometimes simultaneously—is perhaps the most significant transformation in

works on paper. I was curator from 1992-2015.

<sup>3</sup> National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Alex Colville fonds, Fourth Accrual, Box 32, Files 2, 3 and 4.

<sup>4</sup> One rare example is the relationship between Frederick Varley's *The Sunken Road* and its origins in a Canadian Expeditionary Force official photograph. This connection is first cited in art historian Peter Mellen's *The Group of Seven* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 74. Frederick Varley, *The Sunken Road, 1919*, oil on canvas, 132.7 x 162.7 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-0771; William Ivor Castle, *The Battlefield after a Canadian Charge*, October 1916, Canadian War Museum Archives, 19920044-841.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Peter Robertson, *Relentless Verity: Canadian Military Photographers since 1885* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) and Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Routine Order No. 189 was enacted on 20 March 1915.

military and war art history of the past 100 years. War artists had always used photography in their practice, but in keeping with the aesthetic mores of the time, they often hid the fact.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, they had no reason to promote their use of photography, as its presumed indexicality suggested perhaps that the camera saw better than they did. Furthermore, by adapting photography's indexical qualities to their own artworks, they gave credibility to their compositions.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the recognition of photography's role in military art is relatively new.

However, that recognition is growing as photography increasingly carves a space for itself in art institutions previously dedicated only to painting, sculpture, printmaking, and drawing.<sup>9</sup> An increasing percentage of photographers are visible on the Canadian Forces Artist Program website, rising from 20 per cent (four of the twenty-one candidates in Group 2) in 2003–2005, to 60 per cent (six of the ten candidates in Group 7) in the 2014–2015 cohort.<sup>10</sup> A quick survey of the artists who have participated in the program since 2002 indicates that at least 80 per cent work with photography in some way. Some do not overtly acknowledge it, but others, like Leslie Reid (born 1947), exhibit both media as art.<sup>11</sup> Similarly representative of change is the fact that my successor at the Canadian War Museum now holds the title of Historian, War and Visual Culture, and not War Art, as was my position. Her expertise is in film and photography, not painting and drawing, as was mine. Artists, institutions, the public, and art historians are now grappling with photography as part of all artistic practice.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Laura Brandon, "Double Exposure: Photography and the Great War Paintings of Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, and Frederick Varley," *Revue d'art canadienne/Canadian Art Review* 39, no. 2 (2014), 14–28, [http://www.uaac-aauc.com/sites/default/files/39\\_2\\_03\\_Brandon.pdf](http://www.uaac-aauc.com/sites/default/files/39_2_03_Brandon.pdf) (accessed 26 May 2016).

<sup>8</sup> The indexical relationship between photography and war art is explored in James Fox, *British Art and the First World War, 1914–1924* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 90–8. For further insight see Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson, Introduction: "Photography's Double Index (A Short History in Three Parts)" in Kelsey and Stimson, *The Meaning of Photography* (New Haven and Williamstown: Clark Institute and Yale University Press, 2008), vii–xxxi.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the rise of photography as an art form see, Sabine T. Kriebel, "Theories of Photography: A Short History," in James Elkins, ed., *Photography Theory* (London: Routledge, 2007), 3–49. Kriebel dates the shift to the 1960s.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/gal/ap-pa/index-eng.asp> (accessed 26 May 2016).

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, <http://www.lesliereid.ca/news.html> (accessed 27 May 2016).

The recognition that photography was perhaps a form of military art and not simply some kind of timeless documentary record began with the publication of Susan Sontag's influential 1977 essay collection *On Photography*.<sup>12</sup> She argued that with repeated exposure violent images of war ultimately had no impact on viewers and became unreal. Three decades later she reversed her opinion in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, thus opening the field of military and war photography to ongoing debate.<sup>13</sup> Since then, historians of photography have moved beyond critiquing the photograph itself to critically engage with the medium in areas such as ethics and human rights. While these developments are little implicated in the subject of this article, they demonstrate how sophisticated the study of photography has become and how much more we can now learn from artists' engagement with it.

#### ALEX COLVILLE

Internationally recognized as one of Canada's leading artists, the late Alex Colville spent most of his youth in Amherst, Nova Scotia, and attended Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick. After graduation he joined the Canadian Army in 1942 and was appointed a war artist in 1944. Upon arriving in London, Colville was stationed with a supply unit in Yorkshire. He subsequently travelled to France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. He was one of three Canadian artists who visited Belsen concentration camp after its 1945 liberation. In 1946, he returned to Mount Allison as a teacher. Following his retirement in 1963, Colville devoted all of his time to painting.

Alex Colville's war art is notable for his use of watercolour, a medium he largely abandoned post-war. Its use was prompted by the fact that the materials the military authorities provided to him were traditional artists' materials including watercolour pads, tubes of watercolour paint, sketching pads, and pencils. These were dictated

<sup>12</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: A Delta Book, 1977).

<sup>13</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003). Other authors explore photography as mere fantasy, a criticism that can be levied at military photographs that exploit the medium's indexical characteristics to convey impossible realities. See, for example, Steve Edwards, "Fantasy and Remembrance" in *Photography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 112-128.



*A German Flare Goes Up* by Alex Colville. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-1676]

by the nature of conflict, conditions that encompassed frequent movement across challenging terrain, some degree of danger, and a requirement for portability. However, these conditions and materials were constraining when it came to on-the-spot work, making a camera essential. As a result, Colville worked on his paintings (oils were never painted in theatre) in more tranquil surroundings behind the lines, utilizing a mix of quick pencil sketches, more leisured watercolour studies, and photographs, as we shall see.<sup>14</sup> This shows in the precision of line and form and the overall flatness of works like *A German Flare Goes Up*, a dramatic depiction of a nighttime sea landing in southern France in 1944, the kind of tense wartime situation that would never have permitted sketching.<sup>15</sup>

Following the artist's death in 2013, the National Gallery of Canada acquired Colville's archive, including 284 photographic images

<sup>14</sup> Footnote 18 details Colville's mentions of photography in his diaries. It is clear he had a camera and was using it at this time.

<sup>15</sup> Alex Colville, *A German Flare Goes Up*, 1944, watercolour, ink and carbon pencil on paper, 38.8 x 57.2 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-1676.





*Canadian Troopers Guarding the Nijmegen Bridge* by Alex Colville. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19820303-211]

and 25 negatives of wartime scenes photographed by Colville himself. Several were included in the Summer 2015 blockbuster exhibition *Alex Colville* at the Gallery.<sup>16</sup> The exhibition made it clear that these photographs formed the basis of paintings previously assumed to derive from a traditional sketching process involving field notes and compositional studies, as my 1995 article argued. Of the seven images

<sup>16</sup> In a 27 May 2016 email, the curator of the show at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, wrote to me, "I'm afraid we were quite imprecise with the labels for the war photographs." The label information read as follows: "War photographs, c. 1944-45, gelatin silver prints, Alex Colville fonds, Library and Archives, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of the artist, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, 2013. As an official war artist, Colville took photographs which he later used as the basis for many of his drawings, watercolours and paintings. Given the close correspondence between many of these photographs and finished works, it is clear that he composed these photographic images with much care. In the photograph used for *Canadian Troopers Guarding the Nijmegen Bridge*, for instance, Colville has maintained much of original composition, though adding soldiers. War artists were held to high standards of accuracy in portraying equipment, as here with his rendering of the tank. This is the first time these photographs have been exhibited, revealing a previously unknown aspect of Colville's working method during the Second World War." Alex Colville, *Canadian Troopers Guarding the Nijmegen Bridge*, 1944, watercolour on paper, 22.8 x 28.6 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19820303-211.



*Infantry Near Nijmegen* by Alex Colville. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-2079]

discussed in detail in my article, three, *Infantry near Nijmegen*, *Bodies in a Grave*, and *Cutting Firewood near Nijmegen*, also originate in photographs Colville took himself. In the case of *Cutting Firewood near Nijmegen*, the compositions are notably similar.<sup>17</sup>

Given the use of photography in his art practice, it is curious that Colville seems not to have valued his photographs in the way he appreciated his sketches. No photographs were donated to the Canadian War Museum in 1982 along with the sketches, none were ever publicly displayed in his lifetime, and the National Gallery's acquisition of these photographs after his death does not suggest the artist's intention but, rather, estate management. Instead, Colville kept his photographs, suggesting that he did not regard them as disposable ephemera once his work as a war artist was done. He nevertheless

<sup>17</sup> Colville's photographs are not separately catalogued in the National Gallery of Canada's fonds. Nor are images available online. Alex Colville, *Infantry near Nijmegen*, 1946, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 121.9 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-2079; Alex Colville, *Bodies in a Grave, Belsen*, 1946, oil on canvas, 76.3 x 101.6 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-2033; Alex Colville, *Cutting Firewood near Nijmegen*, 1945, watercolour on paper, 39.1 x 57.5 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19820303-259.





*Bodies in a Grave, Belsen* by Alex Colville. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-2033]



*Cutting Firewood near Nijmegen* by Alex Colville.. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19820303-259]



*Olympic with Returned Soldiers* by Arthur Lismer. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-0343]

never publicly talked about his wartime use of photography. The few mentions in his war diaries are drowned in the flood of references to sketching and making drawings.<sup>18</sup> And where one might expect reference, for example in relation to his Belsen compositions for which we now know he took a series of photographs, there is none.

The scarcity of documentary evidence that Colville used photography combined with the absence of the photographs from the public domain means that art historians missed the important role photography played in his wartime art until very recently. Today, a researcher would be more likely to look for the photographic record. In an era that recognizes photography as an art form in its own right and acknowledges its importance in painting practice, the evidence

<sup>18</sup> Colville's diaries, both official and unofficial, date from 21 July 1944 to 31 May 1945. Copies of his war diaries are available for consultation in the Canadian War Museum, Artist Files, Alex Colville, vol. 1. References to photography, film, or cameras occur on the following days: 24, 29, 30 July; 2, 3 August; 25 November 1944; 1 February, 18 March 1945. There is no reference to photography during his time in Belsen (29 April to 2 May 1945) or in connection with *Infantry near Nijmegen* (1 February 1945). Significantly, there is no reference to the photograph associated with *Canadian Troopers Guarding the Nijmegen Bridge* mentioned in footnote 16.



*The Sunken Road* by Frederick Varley. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261-0771 ]

that the authorities issued cameras to Second World War artists increasingly encourages a search for images on the part of scholars.

Twenty-one years ago, this was not the case. That war artists used photography extensively was simply not well known by the public, researchers, or curators, nor was it, in an era that privileged the high arts, of prime concern for art historians or collecting institutions. Changes to acquisition and cataloguing of artists' photographs are still incomplete. The 1979 donation of Arthur Lismer's photographs to the Canadian War Museum—photographs used in the construction of his most famous wartime painting *Olympic with Returned Soldiers* (1919)—did not lead to these images being separately itemized.<sup>19</sup> They are now.<sup>20</sup> Nearly twenty years ago in 1997, Library and Archives Canada's acquisition of Franz Johnston's photographic sources for his 1918 and 1919 wartime aerial paintings did not result in their being catalogued and thus made publicly accessible. This remains the case.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Arthur Lismer, *Olympic with Returned Soldiers*, 1919, oil on canvas, 123 x 163.3 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 19710261- 0343.

<sup>20</sup> Lismer's 24 photographs are part of the Arthur Lismer Fonds, Canadian War Museum Archives, 19790051.

<sup>21</sup> Library and Archives Canada, Mary Bishop Rodrik and Franz Johnston fonds, R 320-0-4-E, Franz Johnston photographs. A majority of the Johnston First World



Notably, fifty years ago, in an almost forgotten interview, Frederick Varley maintained that he saw in 1918 with his own eyes the dead bodies in France that he incorporated into his 1919 painting *The Sunken Road*.<sup>22</sup> However, this was an impossible claim, since he had sourced his dead subjects from an official photograph taken two years before he was even there.<sup>23</sup> The fact that he claimed it as a witnessed experience signifies his fear of being “outed” as a photocopier. It was a safe if false claim until now, since the relevant photograph is only briefly mentioned in three books and on the Canadian War Museum’s database.<sup>24</sup>

The traditional narrative has carefully excluded photography in military painting practice.<sup>25</sup> There are no known images of Canadian war artists taking photographs in the field, but there are many of them sketching near battle sites.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Malak Karsh’s well-known studio photographs of the Second World War official war artists at work in Ottawa shows them surrounded by sketches.<sup>27</sup> There is no evidence of any photographic source material in Karsh’s image of Alex Colville at work on *Infantry near Nijmegen*, even though photography, as we now know, contributed compositional inspiration.<sup>28</sup> Until recently, military art history has veiled the interrelationship of painting and photography.

War paintings are in the collection of the Canadian War Museum.

<sup>22</sup> Journalist Lawrence Sabbath (1915–93) interview with Frederick Varley, 1960. A typescript of this interview is found in the archives of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston. See, also, footnote 4 and Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), figs. 13 and 14, and Maria Tippett, *Stormy Weather, F.H. Varley—A Biography* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998) between pages 84 and 85.

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Until Maria Tippet published her 1984 volume on Canadian First World War art, where she mentioned Varley’s use of photography in *The Sunken Road*, no military art historian or historian had linked war art and photography (see footnote 22).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Canadian War Museum Archives, 20040082-030. Colville is pictured sitting on the ground showing some of his drawings to Lieutenant D. L. Almas.

<sup>27</sup> For more on the Karsh photographs see, Anja N. Werner, “Brush, Canvas, Paint, and Uniform: Malak Karsh’s Portrait Photographs of Second World War Canadian War Artists,” *Canadian Military History* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2012), 56–68, <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1655&context=cmh> (accessed 26 May 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Canadian War Museum Archives, 20040082-031.

What does this signify going forward? Does it infer that every single piece of war art now has to be questioned anew in term of its origins and, then, the question perhaps asked as to which is the primary work of art: the photograph from which the painting derives or the painting? The prime context, of course, must be what the artist thinks about it. What role does the artist see photography playing in his or her own understanding of their practice? For possible answers, we now turn to the contemporary work of Elaine Goble. Unlike Colville, Goble has never been a war artist in the field, but her art of the past 20 years has largely focused on the legacies of war, particularly the Second World War. With no direct experience of conflict she has not been able to hide her photographic sources, nor has she chosen to.

#### ELAINE GOBLE

In 2005, *Legion Magazine* described her work as follows: “Born in 1956 at St. Thomas, Ont., she studied at York University in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario. She resides in Ottawa and has added a new dimension to the body of Canadian war art: the physical and mental price paid by individual men and women who survived war. It can be as graphic as a missing leg or as elusive as loneliness. As she says, ‘they need their story told as much as I need to tell it.’”<sup>29</sup>

Goble works primarily in graphite, with occasional forays into tempera. Her subjects are photographed, selected images printed, and then the final image is squared up for transfer to very large pieces of mat board. Square by square she copies the photographed image onto the support, using minute strokes to add and delete tones, forms, and lines as required. Her graphite pencils go as dark as 6B, which is nearly black. As simulacra, the photographic origins of her works rest compositionally intact in many pieces even though the medium is entirely unrelated. One example is *We are the Dead* (2001) in which a photograph of a dead German soldier is reproduced large-scale

<sup>29</sup> Jennifer Morse, *Elaine Goble*, *Legion Magazine* (1 September 2005), <https://legionmagazine.com/en/2005/09/elaine-goble/> (accessed 27 May 2016).



*We Are the Dead* by Elaine Goble. [Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 20020202-003]

in graphite against a graphite photo-based rendition of Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa, in winter.<sup>30</sup>

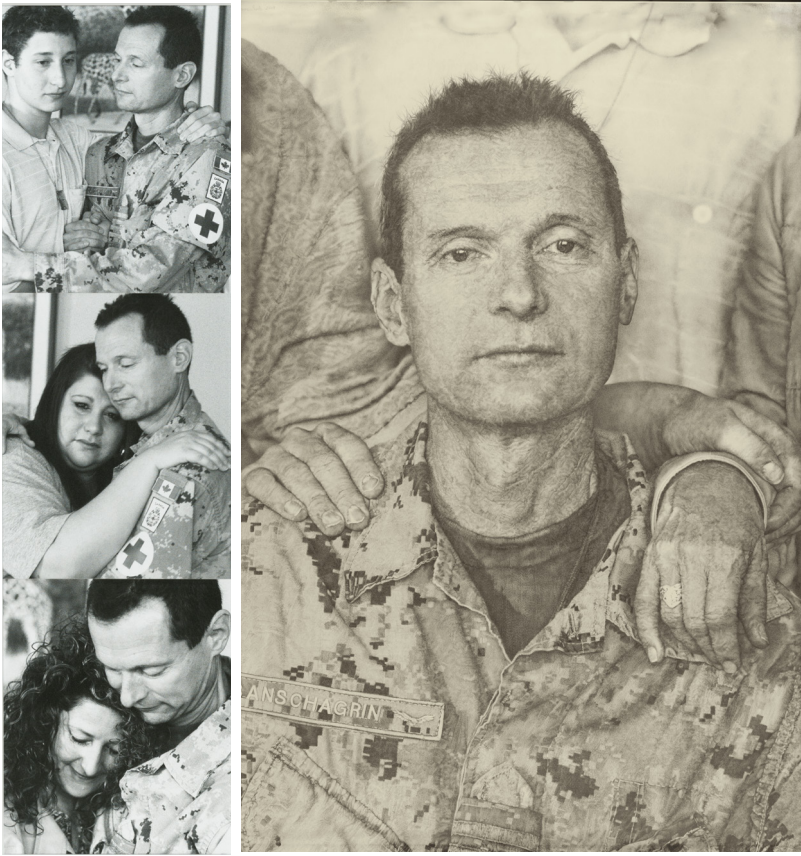
The historic relationship of photography and art, even if the author is the same, is not an equivalent one. Like their predecessors, most contemporary military artists who use photography—and there are many—do not equally value their photography and their art. Not insignificant, public concern about the use of photography in her art making contributes to Goble's lack of appreciation for her work in this medium.<sup>31</sup> Thus, although she works closely from photographs, it only recently occurred to Goble that the photographs that form the basis of her drawn and painted compositions might have value. The result was an important donation to the Canadian War Museum in 2014, denoted as a library research collection.<sup>32</sup> Although she was pleased with this classification, the relative placement of her photographs and artworks sends a distinct signal about which of her

<sup>30</sup> Elaine Goble, *We are the Dead*, 2001, graphite on mat board, 102 x 152.8 cm, Canadian War Museum, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, 20020202-003.

<sup>31</sup> In a 30 May 2016 email to the author, Goble describes a situation where a commissioning agency asked her to destroy her working photographs.

<sup>32</sup> Canadian War Museum Library, 20140332.





*David's Goodbye* by Elaine Goble. [Canadian War Museum, 20110124-001]

creative practices attracts serious institutional interest. Similarly, the comparative dollar value of her photographs is miniscule compared to her finished artworks. A comparison of *David's Goodbye*, a photo-based riff on the traditional family portrait, and *He Has a Little Sister*, a portrait photograph, both from 2008, makes this abundantly clear. Each photograph is worth approximately 1.5 per cent of the value of the artwork.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, comparing the values

<sup>33</sup> Elaine Goble, *David's Goodbye*, 2008, Diptych, photographic print and graphite on paper. Canadian War Museum, 20110124-001. Panel 1 is made up of three photographic prints on paper, each 13 x 31 cm; panel 2 is graphite on paper, 119 x 79 cm; Elaine Goble, *He Has a Little Sister*, 2008, photograph, 61.2 x 81.3 cm, Canadian War Museum George Metcalf Archival Collection, 20110124-003. According to the artist, *David's Goodbye* was acquired for a sum that reflects the market value placed



*He Has a Little Sister* by Elaine Goble.  
[George Metcalf Archival Collection, 20110124-003]

of a compositional sketch by Alex Colville with an albeit unrelated finished painting produces a related result.<sup>34</sup> However, to account for these discrepancies in Goble's work, it is very important to note that Goble herself does not equate her two practices. As she wrote in an email to me dated 22 May 2016, she does not consider herself a professional photographer. In the same way, Colville would not have considered his sketches equal to his finished paintings. It is therefore to the credit of the Canadian War Museum that it continues to collect and archive drawn and photographed preparatory material like theirs.

Nevertheless, the reception afforded Goble's photographic work raises a number of interesting questions. Does Goble's own estimation of her photography as less valuable than her drawn and painted work

on her work (phone call with author, 26 May 2016). *He Has a Little Sister* was acquired at material cost (email to author, 22 May 2016).

<sup>34</sup> Colville's *Harbour* (1975) sold for \$1.88 million at Heffels's Auction House in November 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/alex-colville-painting-sells-1.3339125> (accessed 28 May 2016); a 1973 study for *Woman in a Bathtub* sold for \$32,250 in 2011, [http://www.heffel.ca/auction/Results\\_Lot\\_E.aspx?ID=39515](http://www.heffel.ca/auction/Results_Lot_E.aspx?ID=39515) (accessed 28 May 2016).

help shape institutional and critical perception? Is it that collectors of her work, including museums, do not see her as a photographic artist and therefore do not see her photographs and her art as equally collectable? Do historians, critics and viewers privilege the labour intrinsic to her painstakingly constructed graphite and tempera artworks as art and dismiss her photographic work because it is machine-made and, as often as not, like a sketch, a precedent to the finished work? These are not new questions—they could in somewhat parallel measure be applied to the relationship between Colville's paintings, photographs, and sketches. There are no easy answers.

## CONCLUSION

Contemporary artists who work with photography and other media continue to be challenged by the indelible second-class citizen status afforded their photography, and a lingering reluctance on the part of some artists to acknowledge photography as well as sketching as preparatory practice for painting. Artists whose only medium is photography perhaps do better, as the boundary between preparatory and finished work is generally not as obvious. However, photojournalists who consider their images as art are hampered by a different set of qualitative challenges similar to those that affect commercial artists who seek to be recognized as artists. It was not their commercial work that made the careers of Arthur Lismer, Frederick Varley, and Franz Johnston, but the work they did as painters in their spare time when they were not earning a salaried living. Historic values, artistic intentions, public reception, institutional awareness, and archival resources—these are some of the complicated issues that today are challenging and changing military art and photography. Reason enough for memory institutions to continue to seek to collect and catalogue the sketches and photographs of military and war artists to ensure an objective rather than a subjective record of our shared history.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

An active exhibition curator, **Laura Brandon** is the former Historian, Art and War, at the Canadian War Museum and currently a Research Associate. She is the author of *Art or Memorial? The Forgotten History of Canada's War Art* (University of Calgary Press, 2006), *Art and War* (I. B. Tauris, 2007), and co-author of *Canvas of War: Painting the Canadian Experience* (Douglas and McIntyre, 2000). Currently an adjunct research professor in the School for Studies in Art and Culture at Carleton University, and an adjunct professor in Carleton's History Department, she is a Member of the Order of Canada.